

## **Indiana State Suicide Prevention Coalition Suicide Prevention State Plan**

### **Suicide In Indiana**

Suicide is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of injury death in Indiana. In fact the state's rate has been higher than the national average for nearly a decade. The problem of suicide has an incredibly devastating effect on Hoosier families and communities—lost children, lost loved ones, lost employees, and lost resources. These losses are preventable.

### **National Call to Action**

In 2001, US Surgeon General David Satcher released a report entitled, "National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action." This report described suicide as a serious public health problem throughout the United States, and introduced a blueprint for addressing suicide prevention through Awareness, Intervention, and Methodology (AIM). The Surgeon General also recommended that each state adopt a suicide prevention plan that would incorporate the national recommendations.

### **Indiana's Call to Action**

In response to the national call to action and the magnitude of the problem in the state, the Indiana State Suicide Prevention Coalition (ISSPC) formed in 2001 to address this issue. The Coalition is in a growth phase and our goal is to have all regions of the state as well as a variety of stakeholders including health, mental health, coroner's office, education, policy makers, the faith community, survivors of suicide, youth, elderly, people of diverse racial, ethnic, and gender backgrounds, and others represented on the Coalition.

The mission of the ISSPC is to coordinate, facilitate, advise, and provide resources to Indiana communities for activities that reduce:

- Deaths due to suicide
- Occurrence of suicidal behaviors
- Effects of suicide on Indiana citizens

Subsequent to the formation of the ISSPC, regional suicide prevention coalitions have formed throughout the state. The ISSPC will collaborate with these regional groups to ensure that suicide prevention activities occur in an integrated and culturally appropriate fashion throughout the state.

### **Indiana's Suicide Prevention State Plan**

The ISSPC has drafted this Suicide Prevention State Plan based on the "National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action." The Plan represents a comprehensive and integrated approach to reduce the loss and suffering from suicide and suicidal behaviors across the life span and across the state.

The benefits of the State Plan are to:

- Raise awareness and help make suicide prevention a statewide priority.
- Help direct resources to the issue.
- Provide opportunities to use public-private partnerships and the energy of survivors to engage people who may not consider suicide prevention part of their mission.

- Support collaboration across a broad spectrum of agencies, groups, and community leaders.
- Link information from many prevention programs to avoid unintentional duplication and share information about effective prevention activities.
- Direct attention to measures that benefit all people in Indiana to reduce the likelihood of suicide before vulnerable individuals reach the point of danger.

## **Elements and Implementation of the Indiana Suicide Prevention State Plan**

Indiana's Suicide Prevention State Plan is comprised of three main sections that mirror the National Strategy: Awareness, Intervention, and Methodology. Each section has accompanying broad goals with more specific objectives, and action ideas. The action ideas represent detailed suggested activities that may be implemented by the regional and county-level suicide prevention councils throughout the state, as well as by the Indiana State Suicide Prevention Coalition (ISSPC). The Plan is meant to be a model document that regional and county-level suicide prevention councils can use to create their own strategic plans for action in their communities. The ISSPC sees its role in the following ways:

- It is available in an advisory capacity for the regional and county-level suicide prevention councils, as desired, to offer resources and technical assistance in developing, implementing and evaluating their own suicide prevention strategies and plans.
- It will help coordinate statewide efforts and resources, when possible, in establishing suicide prevention and intervention strategies.
- It will document and monitor the implementation of the statewide plan for suicide prevention.
- It will also implement relevant strategies to meet the plan's objectives.

As this document is intended for use at multiple levels—by both the ISSPC (state) and county-level and regional suicide prevention councils (local)—to help plan suicide prevention efforts, we've marked the objectives below in the following ways: you will find either the word "state", "local" or both "state & local" in parentheses to denote the level of intended action.

As we all work together in the state, we are hopeful that many tragic deaths may be prevented.

## Section 1: Awareness

### Goal 1: Promote public awareness that suicide is a public health problem that is preventable.

#### Objectives:

#### *1.1 Engage in public information initiatives in all regions of the state. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Collect and distribute materials that describe suicide risk and protective factors, present available resources, and explain how to join in the Indiana effort to prevent suicide.

Action Idea B: Create an email distribution list and a website for increasing awareness of activities and providing updates.

Action Idea C: Organize suicide prevention activities such as conferences, forums, press releases and regional meetings to heighten awareness of suicide as a public health problem.

Action Idea D: Create a plan for coordinating media efforts related to suicide prevention.

#### *1.2 Foster collaboration with stakeholders on prevention strategies across disciplines. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Hold public forums across the state at the regional level and in local communities. These forums should present the Indiana Suicide Prevention Plan and local community suicide prevention plans, and encourage regions and communities to act on implementing these plans.

### Goal 2: Develop broad-based support for suicide prevention.

#### Objectives:

#### *2.1 Ensure that the Indiana State Suicide Prevention Coalition receives counsel from diverse disciplines representing all areas of the state. (state)*

Action Idea A: Include representatives from around the state that represent diverse areas including health and human service agencies, faith groups, business leaders and advocates on the statewide suicide prevention coalition. (Years 1-3)

#### *2.2 Support the development of new county-level and regional suicide prevention councils working to prevent suicide in Indiana. (state)*

#### *2.3 Increase funding available to support county, regional and ISSPC in implementing the state and local plans. (state & local)*

**Goal 3: Develop and implement strategies to reduce the stigma associated with being a consumer of mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services.**

Objectives:

*3.1 Raise public awareness related to the following: (state & local)*

- a. Mental and physical health are equal and inseparable components of overall health.*
- b. Mental disorders and chemical dependency are neurobiological diseases that respond to specific treatments.*
- c. Consumers of mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services are pursuing fundamental care and treatment for overall health.*
- d. Suicidal persons with underlying mental disorders must have access to appropriate mental health services and resources. (Years 1-3)*

Action Idea A: Identify, create, and promote a public education presentation that incorporates the following concepts:

- Mental and physical health as equal and inseparable components of overall health.
- Mental disorders and chemical dependency are neurobiological illnesses that respond to specific treatments.
- Fundamental care and treatment for overall health includes mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention services.
- Individuals with mental disorders need to receive community resources information.

Action Idea B: Recruit Coalition members and other relevant community mental health professionals from around the state to provide educational presentations to professional, educational and community groups.

## Section 2: Intervention

### Goal 4: Identify existing or assist in developing community-based suicide prevention programs.

#### *Objectives:*

#### *4.1 Increase the proportion of **school districts and private school associations** with evidence-based programs designed to address serious childhood and adolescent distress and prevent suicide. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Initiate and continue dialogue with school leaders throughout the state including the Department of Education on mental health issues and suicide prevention.

Action Idea B: Survey school districts and private school associations to determine utilization of suicide prevention programs

Action Idea C: Identify model evidence-based programs designed to prevent adolescent suicide.

#### *4.2 Increase the proportion of **colleges and universities** with evidence-based programs designed to address mental health needs of students and ultimately prevent suicide. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Initiate and continue dialogue with higher education leaders throughout the state on mental health issues and suicide prevention.

Action Idea B: Survey colleges and universities to determine utilization of suicide prevention programs.

Action Idea C: Identify model evidence-based programs designed to prevent suicide on college campuses.

#### *4.3 Increase the proportion of **employers** that ensure the availability of evidence-based strategies for suicide. (local)*

Action Idea A: Survey employers to determine utilization of suicide prevention programs

Action Idea B: Identify model evidence-based programs designed to prevent suicide in the workplace.

Action Idea C: Coordinate with employee assistance programs of major employers statewide to promote suicide prevention programs for employees.

#### *4.4 Increase the proportion of **correctional institutions, jails and detention centers** housing either adult or juvenile offenders, with evidence-based suicide prevention programs. (local)*

Action Idea A: Survey correctional institutions to determine utilization of suicide prevention programs

Action Idea B: Identify model evidence-based programs designed to prevent suicide in correctional facilities.

Action Idea C: Coordinate with correctional institutions to promote suicide prevention programs for offenders

#### *4.5 Increase the proportion of **senior community providers** that have evidence-based suicide prevention programs. (local)*

Action Idea A: Survey senior community providers to determine utilization of suicide prevention programs

Action Idea B: Identify model evidence-based programs designed to prevent suicide among senior citizens in assisted living facilities.

Action Idea C: Coordinate with providers to promote suicide prevention programs for senior citizens in assisted living facilities.

### **Goal 5: Promote efforts to reduce access to lethal means and methods of self-harm among those being assessed for mental illness.**

#### Objectives:

*5.1 Increase the proportion of primary care clinicians, other health care providers, and public safety officials who assess the presence of lethal means in the home and educate their clients about actions to reduce associated risks. (local)*

Action Idea A: Promote awareness about the importance of assessing patients for mental health issues and for the presence of lethal means in the home.

*5.2 Increase the public's knowledge of the need to reduce the accessibility of lethal means, including firearms, in the home. (local)*

Action Idea A: Promote awareness of reducing lethal means in the home.

### **Goal 6: Ensure all relevant Indiana health and mental health providers are educated in suicide assessment and management of risk, and identification and promotion of protective factors.**

#### Objectives:

*6.1 Increase the inclusion of suicide risk assessment into the training of the following providers: (state & local)*

- Behavioral health providers
- Health care providers
- Clergy
- Educational institutions
- Correctional personnel

Action Idea A: Survey providers to determine need.

Action Idea B: Coordinate with relevant training programs to incorporate suicide prevention issues into their curricula or enhance existing offerings

*6.2 Increase the proportion of counties in which education programs are available to family members and others in close relationships with those at risk for suicide. (local)*

Action Idea A: Coordinate with county mental health associations to offer programs to family members and those at risk for suicide.

### **Goal 7: Develop and promote effective clinical and professional practices.**

#### Objectives:

*7.1 Develop and distribute guidelines for suicidal risk assessment for persons receiving care in primary health care settings, emergency departments, and specialty mental health and substance abuse treatment centers. (local)*

Action Idea A: Distribute educational media to emergency departments that list important steps in assessing suicide risk and a referral number for mental health services.

Action Idea B: Recommend hospital emergency departments provide patients treated for suicidal behavior with information about community mental health resources.

*7.2 Support providers\* in developing and implementing policies, procedures, and evaluation programs designed to assess suicide risk and implement interventions. (local)*

Action Idea A: Work with local providers to offer community and staff in-service suicide prevention education.

*7.3 Provide best practice models and treatment protocol resources regarding suicide prevention, intervention and assessment to professional practice organizations, professional licensing, certifying and re-certifying, and accrediting bodies. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Collect, distribute and maintain resource database.

*7.4. Increase proportion of those who provide key services to suicide survivors (e.g, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, law enforcement officers, funeral directors, clergy) who have received training that addresses their own exposure to suicide and the unique needs of suicide survivors. (local)*

Action Idea A: Organize suicide survivors in the community to provide seminars to first responders on recognizing and managing the personal impact of suicide.

*7.5. Increase the proportion of patients with mood disorders who complete a course of treatment or continue maintenance treatment as recommended. (local)*

Action Idea A: Include information related to the importance of encouraging patients to continue treatments in all professional education endeavors.

*7.6. Increase the proportion of hospital emergency departments that routinely provide immediate post-trauma psychological support and mental health education for all victims of sexual assault and /or physical abuse. (local)*

Action Idea A: Encourage volunteer training in suicide prevention and victim support and link these volunteers with hospital emergency departments as a resource.

*7.7 Develop guidelines for providing education to family members and significant others of persons receiving care for the treatment of mental health and substance abuse disorders with risk of suicide. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Use resources from national organizations such as SPAN to obtain guidelines for family members of persons receiving care for the treatment of mental health and substance abuse disorders.

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\* The word 'provider' can be defined as behavioral health providers, health care providers, clergy, educational institutions, assisted living institutions, social service organizations, and law enforcement offices.

*7.8 Implement the guidelines from Objective 7.7 in facilities (including general and mental hospitals, mental health clinics, and substance abuse treatment centers). (local)*

**Goal 8: Improve access to and community linkages with mental health and substance abuse services.**

Objectives:

*8.1 Increase coverage of mental health and substance abuse services by Indiana's primary insurance companies—seeking to have mental health coverage comparable to medical health coverage. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Work with existing mental health organizations and advocates to educate legislators and policy makers, in order to build support for legislation that requires health insurance plans to cover mental health and substance abuse services.

*8.2 Increase the proportion of counties with health and /or social service outreach programs for at-risk populations that incorporate mental health services and suicide prevention. (local)*

Action Idea A: Work with existing mental health organizations and advocates to mobilize county health and social service agencies to address the need for all staff who make home visits and /or provide case management services to be trained to make appropriate referrals (especially suicide) to mental health services.

*8.3 Increase the proportion of school-based mental health professionals that have clearly defined guidelines for mental health screening and referral of students in schools and colleges. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Support the appropriate governing bodies to assist school-based mental health professionals in collecting and distributing screening and referral guidelines.

*8.4 Increase the proportion of correctional facility-based mental health professionals that have clearly defined guidelines for mental health screening and referral (especially suicide). (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Support the Department of Corrections in collecting and distributing screening and referral guidelines.

**Goal 9: Improve reporting and portrayals of suicide behavior, mental illness and substance abuse in the entertainment and news media.**

Objectives:

*9.1 Increase linkages to Indiana news and entertainment media to promote accurate and responsible depiction of suicidal behavior, mental illness and related issues. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Create database of Indiana news and entertainment sources.



Action Idea B: Seek out and designate survivors and community advocates who will be willing to serve as media contacts to accurately represent the issues related to suicide.

*9.2 Collect and disseminate materials that sensitize media outlets to the need for promoting accurate and responsible representation of suicidal behaviors, mental illness and related issues in the media. (local)*

Action Idea A: Inform media of the state and regional suicide prevention coalitions, and the availability of media contacts for issues related to suicide.

*9.3 Provide media with press releases, public service announcements, and resident experts to interview to disseminate current and ongoing information about suicide in Indiana's communities. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Invite media to attend conferences, suicide prevention campaigns, programs or trainings.

## Section 3 - METHODOLOGY

### **Goal 10: Promote and support research on suicide and suicide prevention.**

#### Objectives:

*10.1 Collect baseline data to enhance evaluation of suicide prevention strategies. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Create data collection templates to systematize and ease data collection efforts (state).

*10.2 Maintain and disseminate information on suicide prevention activities. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Compile county, regional and statewide listings of the prevention activities, noting program effectiveness.

Action Idea B: Encourage evaluation of new or existing suicide prevention interventions.

Action Idea C: Encourage replication of best practice programs.

*10.3 Create an evaluation plan to accompany this state suicide prevention plan and encourage county/regional suicide prevention councils to adapt it to their needs. (state & local)*

*10.4 Encourage graduate students and interested organizations to research suicide and suicide prevention in Indiana communities. (local)*

*10.5 Ensure that the funding community recognizes and values the need for research on suicide and suicide prevention. (state)*

Action Idea A: Advocate for increased funding needed for research on suicide prevention, translating scientific knowledge into practice, and for training of researchers in suicidology.

### **Goal 11: Improve and expand surveillance systems.**

#### Objectives:

*11.1 Increase the use of standardized protocols for death scene investigations. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Recruit a prominent coroner to serve on the suicide prevention coalition and to promote standardized protocols for death scene investigations.

*11.2 Increase the proportion of hospitals (including emergency departments) that collect uniform and reliable data on suicidal behavior by coding external cause of injuries. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Educate legislators and policymakers on the importance of requiring E coding (external causes of injuries) for hospital discharge data.

*11.3 Produce periodic reports on suicide and suicide attempts, integrating data from multiple data management systems. (Suggested frequency: every 1 to 2 years). (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Support Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) epidemiologist to analyze data from multiple data systems to produce periodic reports on suicides in Indiana.

*11.4 Continue efforts to link and analyze information derived from separate data systems (law enforcement, emergency medical services, hospitals), related to intentional injuries. (state & local)*

Action Idea A: Support the efforts of interested organizations and agencies in the collection of data on suicides utilizing multiple data sources.

**Contact information:**

For questions, comments, or further information please contact:

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